

Frequently Asked Questions about Maine's Statewide Model of School Support

Statewide Model of School Support

What is ESSA and ESEA?

[The Every Student Succeeds Act \(ESSA\)](#) is a 2015 federal law that reauthorized the fifty (50) year old Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965 by replacing key requirements of the outdated No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001. Beginning in 2016, the U.S. Department of Education took the first steps to implement ESSA.

What is an accountability system?

An accountability system helps the state and federal government understand how schools are performing in order to provide adequate support to schools and student groups that may be struggling. It also provides schools and communities with the tools for self-evaluation and improvement as they evolve alongside an ever-changing student demographic, advances in technology and emerging teaching practices.

How did the state decide to use this system? Were stakeholders involved in designing the system?

Beginning in January of 2016, the Maine Department of Education (Maine DOE) engaged a wide variety of stakeholders, including parents, administrators, educators, the [ESSA advisory group](#), the assessment Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), the Title I Committee of Practitioners (CoP), and The English Language Acquisition Committee (ELAC), to develop its accountability system under ESSA. An overview of Maine stakeholder engagement and collaboration with the Northeast Comprehensive Center is located on the [Maine DOE ESSA webpage](#). More recently, Department staff have conducted over 50 face-to-face sessions with community agencies, superintendents, and curriculum leaders soliciting further feedback regarding the Maine's Model of School Support.



How does Maine’s Model of School Support (the new accountability system) measure schools?

This model has been developed through ongoing partnerships with key stakeholders from across the state. Included in this system are five measures of school accountability called “indicators.” These indicators focus on key areas of school and student success, adhere to the requirements of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), and also directly align to [Maine’s Priorities and Goals](#). Below is a list of Maine’s school accountability indicators, as defined in the state’s approved ESSA plan:

1. Chronic Absenteeism (*K–12*)
2. Academic Progress (*Grades 3–8 Only*)
 - Academic Progress in English Language Arts (ELA)
 - Academic Progress in math
3. Progress in English Language Proficiency (ELP) for English Learners (*K–12*)
4. Academic Achievement (*Grades 3–8, 3rd year of high school*)
 - Academic Achievement in ELA
 - Academic Achievement in math
5. Graduation Rate (*high school only*)
 - 4-year graduation rate
 - 5-/6-year graduation rate

Statewide accountability systems are designed to celebrate and share school and student success, and identify areas where additional support is needed, with the goal of increasing achievement for all students.

What do the indicators mean? What are they based on?

Maine’s accountability indicators are based on multiple measures of student success, including attendance, graduation rates, progress for English learners in learning English, and other measures of school quality and student success. Information related to Maine’s accountability measures can be located with the DOE’s [communication toolkit](#).

Many stakeholders provided input on the selection of these indicators through the ESSA planning process, and we look forward to continued engagement with a wide variety of stakeholders throughout implementation.

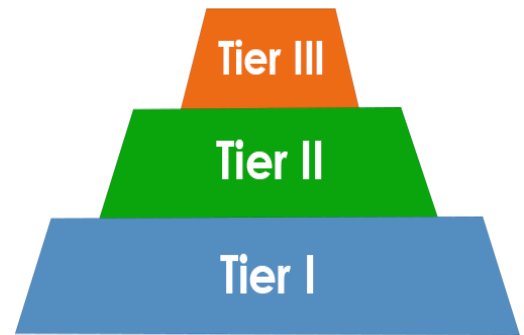
What are Maine’s three tiers of support and how do you interpret the difference(s) between them

Maine has developed three tiers of support that provide various levels of assistance from the Maine Department of Education based on Maine’s accountability system.



Maine's model of school support

Maine has developed a differentiated model of school supports and a process to place schools into one of three (3) different support levels called “tiers.” Higher tiers within Maine’s Differentiated Model of Tiered School Support include robust supports that school will receive from the state.



- **Tier III (three) Comprehensive Support & Intervention (CSI) :** Highest level of support for schools experiencing the most significant challenges. Support includes a school leadership coach & eligible for access to additional federal funding.
- **Tier II (two) Targeted Support & Intervention (TSI):** Support from a school leadership coach & eligible for regional learning opportunities for educators.
- **Tier I (one) Additional Targeted Support (ATSI):** (lowest level of support for schools experiencing challenges at least one specific student population) Eligible for regional learning opportunities for educators.

If my school is identified for Tier 3 supports, what will that mean for my student?

The placement of schools in Tier 3 is based upon the performance of all eligible student groups. Eligible student groups are students who are economically disadvantaged, students with disabilities, English learners, white, black, Asian, Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander, Native American, Hispanic, or two or more races.

With the support of a school leadership coach, schools will be responsible for developing and implementing a school level plan, in partnership with stakeholders, that includes at least one evidence-based intervention. Schools will also have access to additional federal funds to support the implementation of a school leadership team and the school plan. Professional development driven by the needs of school staff and students will be available.

If my school is identified for support or interventions, what will that look like?

Schools that are identified for support are eligible for additional funds, have the opportunity to engage parents and the community in developing a plan for improvement, and will receive additional support from the state and their district.

You can use that information to engage with your school’s administrator or your student’s teachers to see what supports are available for individual students.



What does a performance measure of “Excelling” mean?

Scores at this level indicate that all student groups within the school are exceeding the state’s expectation.

What does a performance measure of “Meeting” mean?

Scores at this level indicate that all student groups within the school are meeting the state’s expectation.

What does a performance measure of “Emerging” mean?

Scores at this level indicate the need for support to move all student groups toward the state’s expectation.

What does a performance measure of “Developing” mean?

Scores at this level indicate that the school is moving student groups toward the state’s expectation and at least one student group is meeting the state’s expectations.

Are these indicators by grade spans such as 3-5, 6-8, 9-12 or do they apply to the district overall?

Indicators apply to an elementary and middle school grade span, grades 3-8, and high school (grades 9-12).

What defines highest support level?

A school with a performance level of emerging across all applicable indicators will be eligible to receive Tier III supports, the highest level of support.

Are you contacting the districts only if they are deemed Tier 3?

The Department will be making personalized phone calls to Superintendents with schools eligible to receive Tier III supports. Schools identified for Tier I supports will receive a more generalized notification.

Will the DOE be contacting principals? If not, who in the district will be notified?

Calls will initially be made to the district superintendent.

Approximately how many schools will be assigned to one school leadership coach.

Current estimates are in the region of 3-4 schools per leadership coach.



What is the relationship between the identification in one indicator and the determination across the indicators of the tier of support needed?

Maine's Model of School Supports								
Tier I (ATSI)			Tier II (TSI)			Tier III (CSI)		
Description:			Description:			Description:		
Any school with one or more student populations experiencing challenges across all indicators			Any schools with one or more student populations consistently underperforming in the same indicator (with the exception of chronic absenteeism) for 3 consecutive years			Title I schools where all student populations are experiencing challenges across all indicators		
Chronic Absenteeism			Chronic Absenteeism			Chronic Absenteeism		
Has a chronic absenteeism rate of 10% or higher.			Any individual eligible student group populations with a chronic absenteeism rate of 10% or higher AND one or more additional indicators.			All eligible student group populations have a chronic absenteeism rate of 10% or higher.		
AND			OR			AND		
Progress in ELP			Progress in ELP			Progress in ELP		
The average progress towards the student's annual target is less than 65%			The average progress towards the student's annual target is less than 80%			The average progress towards the student's annual target is less than 65%		
AND			OR			AND		
Academic Achievement in ELA	OR	Academic Achievement in Math	Academic Achievement in ELA	OR	Academic Achievement in Math	Academic Achievement in ELA	OR	Academic Achievement in Math
Did not make their annual achievement target		Did not make their annual achievement target	An individual eligible student group that did not make their annual target		An individual eligible student group that did not make their annual target	No eligible student group made their annual target		No eligible student group made their annual target
AND			OR			AND		
4 Year Graduation			4 Year Graduation			4 Year Graduation		
Did not make their annual graduation target			An individual eligible student group that did not make their annual graduation target			No eligible student group made their annual graduation target		
AND			OR			AND		
Combined 5/6 Year Graduation			Combined 5/6 Year Graduation			Combined 5/6 Year Graduation		
Did not make their annual graduation target			An individual eligible student group that did not make their annual graduation target			No eligible student group made their annual graduation target		



School Identification

How are schools identified as needing Tier III (CSI) support and what levels of supports will be made available? ?

Tier III Comprehensive Supports and Intervention (CSI)
Title I schools where all student populations are experiencing challenges across all indicators
With the support of a school leadership coach, schools will be responsible for developing and implementing a school level plan, in partnership with stakeholders, that includes at least one evidence-based intervention. Schools will also have access to additional federal funds to support the implementation of a school leadership team and the school plan. Professional development will be available driven by the needs of school staff and students.

Title I schools identified for Tier I supports for three consecutive years will automatically move to Tier III.

How are schools with low-performing student groups identified for Tier II (TSI) and Tier I (additional TSI)?

Tier I and Tier II schools may not have an overall low performance, but they have specific student groups that are falling behind.

Will Tier III schools be the top 25 Title I schools statewide with highest needs identified?

Tier III schools will be eligible for supports if all applicable indicators are emerging. This means that all student groups are struggling to meet state expectations.

If my school is identified as Tier II (TSI) what levels of supports will be made available?

Tier II Targeted Supports and Intervention (TSI)
Any schools with one or more student populations consistently experiencing challenges (over 3 years)
Tier II (TSI) Schools will not be identified in Maine until the 2019/20 school year when three years of progress data will be available. Supports will be determined upon the identification of schools.

If my school is identified as Tier I (ATSI) what levels of supports will be made available?

Tier I Additional Targeted Supports and Intervention (ATSI)
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Any school with one or more student groups experiencing challenges in the same manner as CSI schools

With access to a regional school leadership coach, schools will be responsible for developing and implementing a school level plan, in partnership with stakeholders, that includes at least one evidence-based intervention. Schools will also have access to additional federal funds to support the implementation of . Professional development will be available regionally and statewide.

Where will the list of schools identified as needing support these schools be located?

In January 2019, Maine DOE will release school and district Report Cards in order for school leaders to share this information with parents and community members. [The Report Cards can be found here.](#)

What happened to priority and focus schools?

Before ESSA was passed, states identified their lowest performing schools as priority schools and schools with lower performing student groups were designated as focus schools. Under ESSA, states identify schools for Tier III (comprehensive support and intervention, or “CSI” schools), Tier II (targeted support and intervention, or “TSI” schools) and Tier I (additional targeted support and intervention). Tier III schools are similar to priority schools and Tier I & II schools are similar to focus schools. States determine what constitutes a “consistently underperforming student group” for the purpose of identifying schools for Tier II (TSI).



District and School Report Cards

What does the report card reflect?

The Report Cards are designed to meet federal requirements for data reporting as outlined in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). ESSA requires states to create and publish annual Report Cards that include a wealth of data broken out by student racial and economic subgroups and, for the first time, including military, foster, and homeless students.

Among the key elements:

- A description of the state's accountability system and a definition of its indicators and ranking methodology.
- Where schools rank on the state's accountability system.
- A breakdown by different types of students of schools' standardized test scores and a cross-tabulation of student data.
- The number of inexperienced, ineffective, and out-of-field principals and teachers.
- Graduation rates.
- Disciplinary data including student arrest rates, out-of-school and in-school suspensions, and incidences of violence, including harassment.
- The state's results and ranking on the National Assessment of Educational Progress compared with the national average.
- The number and percentage of students enrolled in preschool programs, Advanced Placement courses, and International Baccalaureate courses.
- The per-pupil spending rates by school, with a breakdown of "personnel" versus "non-personnel" costs and how much of that money came from the local, state, and federal government.

When will school Report Cards be released?

The school Report Cards will be released and posted on the DOE's website during winter 2019.



Questions related specifically to performance indicators:

Chronic Absenteeism

If Pre-K and Kindergarten are not required by law to attend school, why is their attendance part of Average Daily Attendance?

Maine's indicator examines chronic absenteeism (missing 10% or more of school days over the course of a school year) not average daily attendance (ADA). Examining only ADA may mask specific students or student populations who are chronically absent.

Maine's compulsory education laws require children between the ages of seven (7) and 17 to attend school unless he or she has graduated (Title 20-A §5001). However, research shows attendance habits are formed as early as Pre-K and therefore early intervention and supports are essential to ensure students remain on track to be successful. For the majority of Maine school districts, Kindergarten is a full day program and parents have made the choice to enroll students into Kindergarten. As a result, Kindergarten is included in the chronic absenteeism calculation.

Why are students who are suspended considered absent?

Chronic absenteeism takes into account excused and unexcused absences and therefore an absence as a result of an out of school suspension is counted towards overall absence.

Why are there excused absences if any absence counts in ADA?

Maine's Model of School Supports does not utilize ADA counts but examines chronic absenteeism. Chronic absenteeism does not differentiate between excused or unexcused absences – all absences contribute towards chronic absenteeism. Excused absences become important when determining truancy.

What percent of a student's day counts as being fully present?

In order for a student to be deemed as present the student must be in attendance for 50% of their regularly scheduled school day.

Is it true that the chronic absenteeism includes excused absences?

Chronic Absenteeism includes all absences from school. Whether the student is excused or not, they are not in attendance and thus missing their core instruction.



Graduation Rate

If a student graduates in less than 4 years, how is this included in the graduation rate?

Students who graduate early are counted as on time with their cohort.

If a student leaves a high school in 10th grade and enrolls into another high school, to which school is graduation rate attributed?

Students that have transferred out of the initial high school and transferred into new high school will, in theory, have the same cohort year. Therefore, the student is now part of the new high school's adjusted cohort and removed from the original high school's cohort, provided the original high school used the proper exit code when exiting the student.



Academic Achievement

Is the 20% increase from student group baseline data looking at each individual student group or an aggregate of the whole school or both?

The 20% increase is based upon individual student groups utilizing the 2016 baseline data.

How are the goals established for academic achievement?

Baseline data is established for each individual student group utilizing Spring 2016 assessment data or the first year there were 10 or more Full Academic Year (FAY) students in the student group. Every student population is expected to make 1.43% academic growth on the state assessment on an annual basis. The academic achievement indicator is then determined once all student group data has been examined across the school.

When was the 20% improvement goal shared with schools?

The 20% improvement goal was shared with the ESSA Advisory stakeholder group that was made up of superintendents, principals, parents, teachers, and school board members from around the state and they overwhelmingly agreed that it was a manageable goal for all student populations. This equates to a 1.43% increase per year for all student populations across the state. The goals were set using each school's 2016 data for each student population (or the first year for which the school had 10 or more FAY students). The short answer to the question is no, the goals were not shared with schools ahead of time as they were not part of our previously approved state ESSA plan. Once the ESSA Advisory stakeholder group had their final meeting earlier in the fall, the department updated Maine's ESSA Plan and began engaging in statewide discussions with teachers, superintendents, parents, and business and nonprofit leaders. Janette Kirk, Acting Director, Office of Learning Systems and Chelsey Fortin-Trimble, ESEA Federal Programs and School Turnaround Team Leader, facilitated over 50 ESSA implementation sessions over the past 12 weeks to outline the approved components of Maine's ESSA Plan. This element was discussed during each presentation. They met with every Superintendent group in the state. The materials and recording of the department's release of information regarding Maine's Model of Support is available [here](#).



Academic Progress

What is expected growth, particularly if a student is not meeting state expectations?

The following transition table is used for accountability purposes only.

The Maine DOE is utilizing a transition table to determine student academic progress.

		Current Year								Example:			
	Level	1A	1B	2A	2B	3A	3B	4		Prior YR	Current YR	Score	
Prior Year	1A	50	100	150	200	250	350	450	Student A:	1B	2A	100	
	1B	0	50	100	150	200	300	400	Student B:	3B	4	250	
	2A	0	0	50	100	150	250	350	Student C:	2B	1B	0	
	2B	0	0	50	100	150	250	350					
	3A	0	0	0	50	100	200	300	School Total: 350				
	3B	0	0	0	50	100	150	250	Student Group Score: 116.67				
	4	0	0	0	50	100	150	200					

Students below grade level, or scoring below state expectations (Levels 1 & 2) are able to make progress without reaching levels 3 (meeting state expectations) or 4 (exceeding state expectations). If a student at the lower three levels (1A, 1B, and 2A) maintains their score from one year to the next, the student would receive a score of 50. The expectation for students achieving a performance level within the lower three levels would be a one level increase (ex: 1A to 1B). This would earn a score of 100 and thus meet the expected growth target. If a student maintains at a level 2B or 3A, they are either almost at the state expectations or have met the state expectations. Due to the close proximity to meeting state expectations, the student would receive a score of 100. Students that maintain a 3B or 4 receive accelerated credit because of the level of rigor involved with those performance levels.

$$\frac{\text{Total of all progress scores from eligible students}}{\text{Total number of eligible students}} = \text{Progress Indicator Score}$$

The resulting score is expected to be 100 or greater, which would indicate the student group has made progress. It should be noted that this is not a percentage.

Are you comparing the eMPower test (state assessment) from March-April 2017 to March-April 2018 to make the decision regarding academic progress?

Academic Progress is calculated using the 2017 data in comparison to the 2018 data for each individual student, which is then aggregated up to the school level for each student population.

Is the data evaluating the effectiveness of schools based on students who participated in the tests during those times? Is there a minimum amount of time that a student had to be educated in the school to count in the academic progress rating?

The accountability system examines data related to students who were enrolled for a full academic year for Academic Achievement (continuously enrolled from October 1st to May 4th). For Academic Progress, the student would have to be marked as a full academic year student in the same school for two consecutive years.

